DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 481 609 UD 035 916

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TITLE	Preparing Urban Teachers: Uncovering Communities. A Community Curriculum for Interns and New Teachers.
INSTITUTION	Jobs for the Future, Boston, MA.
PUB DATE	2003-09-00
NOTE	17p.; Produced with Metlife, Inc.
AVAILABLE FROM	Jobs for the Future, 88 Broad Street, Boston, MA 02110. Tel: 617-728-4446; Web site: http://www.jff.org.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*College School Cooperation; *Cultural Awareness; Curriculum Development; Elementary Secondary Education; Graduate Study; Higher Education; Masters Degrees; *Mentors; *Partnerships in Education; *Preservice Teacher Education; *Professional Development Schools; Student Diversity; Student Teachers; Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS	Tufts University MA

ABSTRACT

The Urban Teacher Training Collaborative (UTTC) is a school-university, school-based, Master of Arts in Teaching Program developed by Tufts University and three small Boston Public Schools. The program reflects partners' understanding of the needs of urban students and teachers. It presents an innovative model for teacher training similar to the residency model used to train medical professionals. UTTC student teachers work at their assigned schools full time under the guidance of mentor teachers and university professors during the public school year. This curriculum is the result of the UTTC's work to refine and expand its efforts to deeply acquaint its interns with the diverse communities and cultures from which their students come. Goals of the community curriculum include cultivating in the interns a deeper understanding and appreciation of their students' cultures, histories, and home communities; reflecting on their assumptions about urban areas; and understanding the impact of race, ethnicity, and culture in their lives and classrooms. The paper presents seven site seminars: Encountering the History; Boston Tour: A City Envisioned and Evolving; Walking Tours of Jamaica Plain and Mission Hill; Exploring a Specific Neighborhood; Bringing it All Back Home; and Home from Students' Perspectives. (Contains 13 references.) (SM)

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Preparing Urban Teachers: Uncovering Communities

A Community Curriculum for Interns and New Teachers

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September 2003

A JOINT PUBLICATION OF THE URBAN TEACHER TRAINING COLLABORATIVE AND JOBS FOR THE FUTURE, PREPARED WITH FUNDING FROM METLIFE FOUNDATION

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Preparing Urban Teachers: Uncovering Communities

A Community Curriculum for Interns and New Teachers

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Preparing Urban Teachers: Uncovering Communities

A Community Curriculum for Interns and New Teachers

Introduction

Established in 1999, the Urban Teacher Training Collaborative is an innovative school-university, school-based, Master of Arts in Teaching program developed by Tufts University in conjunction with three small Boston Public Schools (the Boston Arts Academy, Fenway High School, and Mission Hill School). The UTTC program, which is an example of the Professional Development School model, reflects the partners' understanding of the needs of urban students and teachers. The UTTC is committed to developing effective, collegial, and reform-minded teachers for city schools.

The mission of the UTTC is to help meet the need for good urban teachers through an innovative model for teacher training similar to the "residency" model used to train medical professionals. Instead of completing a typical ten-week school internship after a semester of university courses, UTTC student teachers—referred to as interns—work at their assigned schools full-time under the guidance of mentor teachers and university professors, starting on the first day of school and ending in May.

Most of the interns at the Boston Arts Academy, Fenway High School, and Mission Hill School come from the Urban Teacher Training Collaborative's program at Tufts University, although some are students at Berkelee College, Boston University, Emerson College, Harvard University, Lesley University, Mass College of Art, and Simmons College. Of the 2002-2003 interns, 20 percent were African-American, 15 percent were Asian-American, 10 percent were Hispanic, and 55 percent were white.

Interns start assisting their mentor teacher immediately and participate in all the usual activities of teachers, including staff meetings and special programs. To fulfill their degree requirements, three of their graduate courses are taught at the school site. In addition, interns from all sending universities attend seven half-day site-based seminars in the fall, co-taught by a Tufts University professor and a Fenway High School teacher who is also the intern coordinator.

From January 2002 to June 2003, with support from MetLife Foundation and Jobs for the Future, the UTTC refined and expanded its efforts to deeply acquaint its interns with the diverse communities and cultures from which their students come. This effort is based on the belief that teacher preparation courses do a great job of focusing on students and content but not on communities or building relationships with adults in schools. The work resulted in this curriculum, *Preparing Urban Teachers: Uncovering Communities*, as well as a DVD that documents a series of on-site seminars, including the interns' experiences and reflections.

The curriculum, along with its seminars and their sequence, is a work in progress. It is presented to raise challenging questions, stimulate thought, and offer a starting place for teacher educators and district-level administrators. Use it as a guide, one that can be adapted to the particular needs of other communities, to design or refine similar programs for interns or teachers new to urban districts.

Why Is a Community Curriculum Important?

Recent findings from the *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* reveal that "feelings of alienation from school are prevalent among students, parents, and teachers at the secondary level" (MetLife 2000). One of the primary reasons is the lack of connection between students and their teachers.

> Only one quarter of secondary school students are very satisfied with their relationships with their teachers (27 percent) or their principal (25 percent). This result reflects the finding from *The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 2000*, in which four in ten (39 percent) secondary school students only trust their teachers little or not at all (MetLife 2001).

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It is, therefore, not surprising to find that from young people's perspective the basis for effective learning environments is caring, respectful, and trusting relationships with adults.

> Pressed to explain what they mean, young people talk about more than just nurturing and support, although that is clearly important. Caring relationships, to young people, are based on fairness, equity, and respect—not just for themselves as individuals but also toward their families (Steinberg and Allen 2002).

Caring relationships in any school environment can assist students by drawing them into learning and enabling them to persist in the face of obstacles, increasing their academic achievement, affirming their identities, and keeping them in school (Steinberg and Allen 2002, Hollins 1996, Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory 2002, and Nieto 2003). Yet today the development of these relationships can be hampered by a divide that has been deepening between the racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds of the adults in schools and the students whom they teach. Over the last four decades, the student population attending our nation's schools has changed dramatically, becoming more ethnically, linguistically, and economically diverse. In large urban districts, most students attending school are non-white and often multilingual newcomers to the United States.

At the same time, "the teaching force is actually becoming increasingly white due mainly to the striking decline in the Black, Hispanic, and Asian enrollments in teacher education programs since 1990" (Hodgkinson 2002). Nationwide, 10.8 percent of public school teachers are American-Indian, Alaskan-Native, Asian, Pacific Islander, or African-American; 89.2 percent are white, 5.6 percent of all teachers classified as white are Hispanic. Although urban districts have more varied teaching forces, with 20.4 percent classified as racially diverse and 79.6 percent as white, including 10.2 percent Hispanic (Shen 2003), the racial, ethnic, or socio-economic diversity in their student populations still is not reflected in their teaching forces.

Diversity among students can enrich classroom environments, raising adults' and students' awareness of the histories, languages, religions, and customs of other cultures. However, it also poses a challenge for new teachers whose cultures are different from their students or who are not familiar with the beliefs, values, histories, and traditions of all the communities from which their students come to school.

> Even though most teachers enter the profession for noble reasons and with great enthusiasm, many of those in urban schools know little about their students and find it hard to teach them. Thus, despite their good intentions, many teachers who work with students of racial and cultural backgrounds different from their own have limited experience in teaching them and become frustrated and angry at the conditions in which they must work (Nieto 2003).

Teachers themselves recognize this as a significant challenge to their being an effective teacher. "Teachers in schools with more than two-thirds minority students are less likely than those with few minority students to report that teachers in their schools know a lot about the surrounding community (34 percent vs. 56 percent)" (MetLife 2002).

This lack of knowledge about culture and community makes it more difficult for new teachers to establish trusting relationships with students, and it can impede student learning (Gay 2000; Hollins 1996). To overcome this, Hollins (1996) stresses the importance of educators having critical information about their students, families, and communities: the knowledge, experiences, perceptions, and expectations of their students; the expectations, perceptions, and desires of their families; and the history and culture of the community. Because building this knowledge and competency takes time, it is important to instill in interns and beginning teachers an interested, open posture towards their students and families—one that will become a "way of life" for them throughout their careers.

Several activities can help to bridge these gaps: home visits or conversations with parents about their expectations for their child's schooling, observations of students in and out of school, conversations with students and knowledgeable community members, attendance at community gatherings, volunteering in community-based organizations, and learning and sharing what writers and thinkers of different cultures have to say about themselves and their culture (Villegas 1993; Delpit 1995; Hollins 2002).

This curriculum is one way that the UTTC bridges these cultural and community divides. As such, it provides interns—whether white, African-American, Asian, or Hispanic—with opportunities to see communities

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through their students' eyes, using neighborhood tours, interviews with "wise people" in communities, and dialogue with their colleagues. The UTTC's commitment to a diverse group of interns provides a rich cohort for these discussions during the year. Finally, the year-long internship offers the interns a means to use this knowledge of cultures and communities to build caring relationships with their students and to make changes in their instructional practice to accommodate the diversity of their students and their learning styles.

The UTTC interns' journey to gain a greater awareness of their own culture and community as well as a growing understanding of their students' and families' racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds begins with the seminars described in *Preparing Urban Teachers: Uncovering Communities*. These seminars give the beginning teachers a foundation upon which they can build to deepen their understanding of their students and the communities in which they teach throughout their careers.

Goals of Community Curriculum

Realizing that UTTC interns need to cultivate a deeper understanding and appreciation of the cultures, histories, and home communities of the ethnically varied students in their schools, the project has been refining and building upon the curriculum over the last 18 months. It builds community understanding among the UTTC interns through seven half-day seminars conducted in the community or at Fenway High School in the fall. Through these experiences, UTTC seeks to:

Cultivate in the interns a deeper understanding and appreciation of their students' cultures, histories, and home communities:

- Make their students' urban neighborhoods more concrete and personal
- Expose interns to the vibrancy and complexity of urban neighborhoods
- Model a path that interns can follow in their first-year teaching placements to understand their new students' daily lives and to appreciate their families and communities

Reflect on their assumptions about urban areas:

- Expand interns' thinking about what "urban" means
- Help interns see beyond "deficiency" in high-poverty urban areas
- Encourage interns to question stereotypes of urban neighborhoods and, in turn, the values and lifestyles of urban students and their families

Understand the impact of race, ethnicity, and culture in their lives and their classrooms

- Increase interns' understanding of the history and the influence of race and ethnicity
- Help interns to analyze and reflect on the role of race, ethnicity, and home culture in their own lives and in their teaching

Provide an opportunity through which interns can experience the importance of developing and maintaining collegial relationships with other teachers

Ways to Use the Curriculum

With the pressure of standards and program requirements that tend to drive curriculum and programs at all educational levels, educators can implement this critical component of teacher training in a variety of contexts. In school districts, the curriculum, or pieces of it, could be part of an orientation for new teachers. If a district pairs mentor teachers with new teachers, mentors can plan and implement these activities. If both mentors and new teachers participate, it provides a common experience upon which to build future discussions of race, ethnicity, and home culture.

In a teacher preparation program, on-site experiences during student teaching or an internship can incorporate these activities. They can also be included as a component of a course that introduces schooling. However, to be most beneficial to the interns, this curriculum should be a school-based experience as they need to learn more about the students with whom they are working. In the UTTC's model, the curriculum is part of the intern's on-site seminars in the fall. It becomes a compelling source of learning for the interns because of the thoughtful work of the intern coordinator, the support of the administrators in the school sites, the contributions of the Tufts University faculty, and the community participants. This collaboration models the essence of the kind of partnerships that are necessary to train effective teachers for the 21st century.

SITE SEMINAR 1

Encountering the History

Setting/Time

Four-hour seminar at Fenway High School/ mid-September

Goals

- To become acquainted with the purpose and history of Boston's pilot schools;
- To understand the city's history and its historical lines and divisions; and
- To understand why the students come from such varied neighborhoods.

Description of the Site Seminar

In the first half of this seminar, a former director of one of the high schools shared the history of Boston's pilot schools. He placed most of his emphasis on gradual changes in pedagogy and school structure to meet the needs of the small schools' varied urban students.

In the second part of the seminar, a professor from Tufts University discussed Boston's history prior to court-ordered busing in the 1970s. He laid the precedents for why there is such diversity among the students in the interns' classes.

Key Implementation Steps

Select a school colleague or someone from the community who knows the city's history, has an understanding of its diverse cultures, and has the ability to convey that information effectively to the interns or first-year teachers. With the speaker, determine what historical and cultural information is most important to share. Foremost among the information to be conveyed is how the city's history has affected the schools. (In the Urban Teacher Training Collaborative site seminar, the seminar leaders were white. This made it critical to balance their racial make-up. In such a case, select seminar speakers who represent one or more of the diverse cultures in your city.)

Seek a speaker who has knowledge of the city's history *and* its current politics. In most cities understanding the political climate is essential to understanding why the schools work the way they do.

Choose one or two readings about the city's history or cultural diversity to prepare interns or first-year teachers for this seminar. Give them some questions or issues to consider as they read the articles. As a warm-up activity, give the interns a few moments in pairs to share the key themes or questions that came from their reading of the articles.

As a follow-up activity, recommend that the interns read a book about the city's history. We suggested that the UTTC interns read *Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families* by Anthony Lukas or *All Souls: A Family Story from Southie* by Michael MacDonald.

What We Might Change Next Year

- We would include an African-American political figure from the city who has been advocating for improved education.
- We would add a reading to support the oral presentation (e.g., two eye-witness narratives).
- We would conduct another seminar session on the history of the Boston Public Schools after the 1970s. This might help the interns to further understand why their classrooms are so diverse, with African Americans, Caribbean Americans, Vietnamese, Latinos, whites, etc., and why so many white and middle-class students are attending private or parochial schools.

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SITE SEMINAR 2

Boston Tour: A City Envisioned and Evolving

Setting/Time

All-day bus tour with lunch/October

Goals

- To envision what Boston looks like as a city;
- To see its many waterways, major roadways, centers of activity, schools, churches, and geographic features;
- To gain an appreciation of the students' communities;
- To recognize that Boston has a reputation as not especially hospitable for people of color, but that many people of color call it home and try to build good communities and influence Bostonians to recognize and appreciate its diversity;
- To notice the differences between urban and suburban neighborhoods, especially as they might contrast with the interns' own experience;
- To dispel the interns' fear of being in parts of the city in which they are in the racial minority; and
- To build collegial relationships among interns.

Description of Site Seminar

This tour of Boston's neighborhoods was conducted by Karilyn Crockett, an African-American woman who grew up in Boston and is the former director and co-founder of MYTOWN, a non-profit organization that uses history as a youth development and community-building strategy and promotes tours and education about many neighborhoods in the city. MYTOWN's Youth Development Program hires Boston Public School students to research their local and personal histories. These students then teach what they have learned to the public by leading walking tours, presenting slide shows, and completing other interactive, educational activities. MYTOWN's Civic Education Program uses the built environment to focus on the accomplishments of ethnic and immigrant communities, the complexities of urban development, and the power of citizen activism.

The bus tour introduced the interns to Boston's varied neighborhoods. They stopped at places that are off the beaten path but were important to the city's history, such as churches that had played important roles in the Revolutionary and Civil wars. The tour ended with lunch at a restaurant that is an institution in the African-American community. The interns had a chance to relax and talk about what they had seen that day.

Through this experience, the interns formed images of Boston's neighborhoods that they can draw on when their students talk about where they live. The interns began to realize how hard it can be for youth, especially youth of color, to negotiate the city and find things to do. Interns were exposed to questions about access and resources: Where do youth go? What clubs or athletics can they be a part of? Where can they walk on a Sunday afternoon? Where do they hang out?

The interns gained an understanding of what students go through to arrive at school each day—how hard it is to transport themselves across great distances—and they also began to understand how important school is to their students. Unlike their counterparts in suburban schools, urban students leave one cultural community, pass through several others on their way to school, and enter another when they arrive. These multiple journeys are difficult but they create a vibrant, healthy mix of students in the city's schools. Through this experience and their year-long internships, the interns increasingly see that this diversity is an opportunity, not a barrier.

Key Implementation Steps

- To conduct the tour, find a person who lives in the city and has a strong sense of its history. That person needs to have a love of the city and knowledge

What We Might Change Next Year

- We might do the citywide MYTOWN tour later in the series of seminars, so that it becomes a summary of the other experiences.
- We might include some high school students on the tour. They would make the experience more real (e.g., "There's my house" or "There's the Boys and Girls Club where I meet my friends"). This personalizing of the experience would make it more genuine and would resonate emotionally with the interns.
- We would phrase our questions not to simplify but to expand the interns' thinking and raise important, sensitive issues. For example, we might ask a white intern what was his or her previous perception of Roxbury and what was it like for him or her to be in Roxbury? We might ask an African-American intern the same question in relation to South Boston or a Latino the same question in relation to Charlestown. Or we might ask interns from out of state to contrast their images of the city with their expectations or with their home cities. We might also more consistently ask for observations and questions about social class.

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of its architecture, its cultural and ethnic centers, etc. The modeling of someone who has a broad, scholarly interest in the city's history is good for interns or first-year teachers.

- Plan the tour with this person, ensuring that it includes visits to communities in which students live, places that students frequent in their off-school hours, and schools from which they come.
- It is important to prepare well for the city tour. This preparation might entail an overview of the city's history, informal interviews with or surveys of students to gain information about places of interest outside of school, a clear explanation of the purpose of the city tour, the generation of questions interns would like to have answered through the tour, etc. With inadequate preparation, interns might feel like they are "watching people in the zoo" as they drive by on the bus or that they are doing a distant social science observation, which might not be respectful of the people in the communities. This trip is meant to give a city overview, both visually and personally. It is *not* sufficient, and may even be damaging, if it is not embedded in other seminars, tours, and historical knowledge.
- Give the interns current maps, statistical information about the city and its schools, and a guide book to broaden their vision of the city.
- After the tour, set aside time for the interns or teachers to discuss what they learn and how this has implications for working with students in their classrooms.

SITE SEMINARS 3 AND 4

Walking Tours of Jamaica Plain and Mission Hill

Setting/Time

Four-hour Saturday walking tours of the Jamaica Plain and Mission Hill neighborhoods/late September and mid-October

Goals

- To understand the particular history of a neighborhood;
- To realize that a student guide who loves the neighborhood knows a lot about its history and why it is a cool place to live;
- To visit a neighborhood on a busy weekend and do what people who live there do, such as eating lunch at a local restaurant or sitting in a park; and
- To compare the state of the neighborhood's public resources for youth—for example, the health center, basketball courts, and playgrounds—to those in the interns' own neighborhoods.

Description of Site Seminar

High school students, hired and trained by MYTOWN, led half-day tours of both of these neighborhoods to show interns what children and teens do in these communities: where they play, where they hang out, where they go to church. The guides conveyed the history of the neighborhood from colonial times through today, while walking interns through the area. The guides pointed out important landmarks and community buildings, and they made the interns feel "invited" into their neighborhoods. At the conclusion of the tours, the interns had lunch in one of the neighborhood's restaurants.

The all-city tour in Site Seminar 2 was conducted on a weekday. The benefit of conducting the neighborhood tours on Saturdays was that more of the community was visible conducting weekend activities. These smaller MYTOWN tours also allowed the interns to learn about the neighborhoods in a more relaxed way.

Key Implementation Steps

- Identify which neighborhoods will be the focus of these tours.
- Invite students from those neighborhoods to work in teams to plan the tour. The students could survey the interns to determine what they would like to see and learn from the tour, identify the sites to visit, research the history of those sites, and design the tour (i.e., the order in which to visit important places).
- Select one or a menu of several ethnic, neighborhood restaurants in which the interns can have lunch, get to know one another better as colleagues, and discuss what they have learned and how it might impact their teaching or relationships with their students.

What We Might Change Next Year

- Due to cost, we would plan and conduct these tours with the students. It will require a great deal of preparation and organization, but it would make the tours more meaningful for the interns. They would see a neighborhood through the eyes of students they see every day.
- We would ask the interns to attend (and report on) at least one community forum in their students' neighborhoods.

SITE SEMINAR 5

Exploring a Specific Neighborhood: Meeting Wise People

Setting/Time

Site visits, formal interviews with community activists and wise people, and informal conversations with residents in various neighborhoods/mid-October

Goals

- To meet people in each neighborhood who really care about the neighborhood and its youth;
- To talk to "wise people" and politically savvy people to increase the interns' understanding of the issues and important programs and services in each neighborhood;
- To build out-of-school collegial relationships with other interns; and
- To understand that collegial relationships sustain teachers and that these relationships can be built inside and outside of work.

Description of Site Seminar

The intern coordinator grouped the interns into mixed teams of three or four by gender, race, and school. Each team focused on one of five neighborhoods: Charlestown, Chinatown, Dorchester, Hyde Park, and Roxbury. Each team received a kit that included directions (see sample on page 11), maps, a brief history of the neighborhood (see sample on page 12), and information on its wise people. Students at Fenway High School and the Boston Arts Academy, along with the intern coordinator and Karilyn Crockett from MYTOWN, identified key people to interview in the neighborhoods (see sample student survey on page 13). Each team interviewed one wise person and one community activist. These walking tours and interviews were videotaped to capture the neighborhoods, and the visits were discussed and shared by the teams at the next site seminar.

Key Implementation Steps

- Before planning this session, it is important to recognize two fundamental beliefs behind this activity:
  1) Interns must meet people from a variety of racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds to understand what life is like for them in the city. It's important for them to find out how each of them feel about their acceptance in the community, to understand why they may or may not feel welcomed in specific places, and to appreciate why they love the city and are invested in it for the duration.
  2) Interns or new teachers need to talk to neighborhood folks who care about youth. It is not enough to read about these community leaders. The passion, enthusiasm, and knowledge they have for their work and their children are not easily translated to the written page.
- Determine the neighborhoods in which interns will interview wise people and community activists. Survey high school juniors and seniors from those neighborhoods to identify prominent individuals who have deep knowledge of the area and have a commitment to improving the lives of its youth.
- Contact the wise people and the community activists in each neighborhood. Explain that they have been nominated as people who know a lot about that neighborhood, explore more about their background and what they might be able to share with interns, explain the opportunity and its purpose, and ask them if they would be willing to meet with the interns. Make sure that they understand that the interns are most interested in finding out more about the lives of youth in this neighborhood, the cultural issues they face, and the services of which they avail themselves.
- Develop kits on each neighborhood that include directions, maps, a brief history of the area, information on the individuals the interns will interview, and a schedule of interviews.

What We Might Change Next Year

- Although the intern coordinator talked extensively with the wise people in each neighborhood, the value of the experience for interns was varied. Many factors may have contributed to that, but the depth was less when the wise people in those neighborhoods spent more time on history and less on what is currently happening in the neighborhood. It would be better to have more youth-oriented wise people who would balance the history with a strong discussion of the issues youth face in their neighborhood, the services available to them, and the places or activities that occupy their time.
- We would include a school in each neighborhood tour. We want interns to appreciate the varied school experiences that their urban students bring with them to high school.

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- At the end of the day, provide an opportunity for the interns or first-year teachers to discuss what they have learned from the wise people and their visits to various neighborhoods. Ask questions that challenge them to grow and to adjust their assumptions about these neighborhoods. For example:
  - For those interns who grew up in one of the city's neighborhoods, what is it like to come back as an adult?
  - For others, what is it like to spend a day in a neighborhood in which you are not the dominant racial group? If you grew up in a suburban neighborhood, how does this urban neighborhood strike you?
  - What ethnic cultures are represented in this neighborhood? Where are people from? What indications of culture do you see in stores and street life?
  - In general, compare what you are seeing and learning here to your own experience.

SITE SEMINAR 5:

Sample Directions for Off-Site Seminar

As in all Boston high schools, the Boston Arts Academy and Fenway High School students come to school each day from a variety of places around the city. A few live right downtown or close by in the South End, a tiny number live here in the Fenway neighborhood, but most live further out in Dorchester, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, Hyde Park, and other neighborhoods.

Today you will be visiting a specific neighborhood in Boston. I have chosen three neighborhoods that represent the communities that many of our students come from: Dorchester, Roxbury, and Hyde Park. I have also included Charlestown and Chinatown, two neighborhoods of historic importance in the city that we did not visit on any of our MYTOWN trips. Though we may not have large numbers of students from these neighborhoods, they are fascinating places with distinctive, self-contained cultures; students who do come from these neighborhoods have very strong identity with their home communities and it is important to get some sense of why that might be.

To explore your designated neighborhood, you and three or four other interns will use the accompanying map to **find it**! On the way there, you can take a look at some of the **literature** to learn more about the background of your area. Then, if you do not have an early morning appointment, just go to the "main street" and **walk around** for a half hour or so to get a feel for the place. Talk to people. Try to find out what is special, important, or inviting about this place. What would make someone want to live here or not want to live here? What is life like for children and youth in this area? Is there stuff for them to do? Where?

During the course of the morning, you will have several **appointments** with community members who were recommended to me as holders of neighborhood history and wisdom. They are not teenagers themselves, but I've asked each one to address the question: What is it like for a kid growing up here? You will need to use your collective map skills to **find each person** and you may need to remind the person of who you are and what your purpose is. I do not personally know all of these people, so I can't guarantee that they will all be fabulously with it and cool. They were very willing and informative on the phone, so I am confident that you will learn a lot from them. Relax. Try to **soak up the atmosphere; ask questions and listen well.**

Although Boston is a relatively small city, there are still many neighborhoods that we have not yet visited. We can't visit them all in a few Fridays, but we can start to sense and understand some of the distinctions that give each section its flavor and that, when layered over each other, make for a complex, enriched mix in the city and in our schools.

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SITE SEMINAR 5:

Example of Brief Neighborhood History: Roxbury Summary

Settled in 1630. Named for Rocks Berry—due to the puddingstone that is found here. In 1635, Roxbury Latin High School was founded. The town, which included West Roxbury, Mission Hill, and Jamaica Plain, was founded in 1639. It was a farming and stone mining community in a strategic military position as it had the only land route into Boston.

In the 1800s, Greek revival mansions were built; one example was the Roxbury Action Program's present-day home. In the 1840s, a center of poor Irish immigrants developed along the Tidal Flats. An anti-Irish Catholic riot led to the death of an Irishman. St. Patrick's church was founded on the corner of Hampden and Dudley.

In the 1850s, many Germans immigrated to Roxbury, fleeing unrest in their native land. They began, among other things, to start breweries. In 1885, Frederic Law Olmstead completed Franklin Park, which was the final link in the Emerald Necklace (2,000 acres).

In the late 19th century, many Jewish immigrants called Roxbury their home and several temples were built to accommodate their needs. In the early forties and fifties of the 20th century, many African-Americans migrated from Lower Roxbury to Roxbury, replacing the Jewish community. They found employment in wartime defense industries, like Raytheon.

The El was on Washington Street from approximately 1900 to 1987, when it was removed and the Orange line replaced it on the Southwest Corridor Park. Since then, there has been a need for better public transportation. The Silver Line bus is not adequate to the task.

Malcolm X spent time in Roxbury. His arrest in Boston in 1946 led to his conversion in prison to Islam and to the Nation of Islam. He founded the first N.O.I. temple on Intervale Street in 1954.

Melnea Cass, who was the "first lady" of Roxbury and has a boulevard named for her, devoted 60 years of her life to the community and its residents. She was a prime example of the activism that is prevalent in this neighborhood. Another example of activism occurred in 1985, when there was an unsuccessful vote in Roxbury to secede from Boston and form a city known as Mandela.

Today, affordable housing is an issue in Roxbury. While affordable housing is necessary to maintain the familial and cultural flavor of the community, median and market-income housing must be created so that a solid economic foundation can support the aforementioned. This debate will go on as long as there are members of the neighborhood that wish Roxbury to remain a community that is a haven for immigrants and long-time residents rather than a vibrant and supportive location for businesses.

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SITE SEMINAR 5:

Sample of Student Survey

September 10, 2002

Dear Seniors:

All of the interns in Fenway and BAA will be out of the building making morning visits to Boston neighborhoods on October 11th. The purpose of this visit is to broaden interns' vision of Boston and to help them learn something about our neighborhoods. Because you live in your neighborhood, you are a good source for ideas about what a visitor should see or do in your part of town. Could you please fill out this survey so that I get your ideas before I start making plans? Thank you for all your help, fabulous seniors.

Yours,

E.S.S.

Your Name: _____

Your Neighborhood: _____

(Be specific, don't just say "Dorchester," say "Codman Square" or "Fields Corner.")

If your friends were visiting from out of town, what important places would you point out to them in your neighborhood?

_____

_____

If you were going to take pictures of five places (store, corner, playground, church) in your immediate neighborhood that young people use, what would those five places be?

_____

_____

If you were going to eat lunch, where would you eat? Is the owner someone who knows a lot about the neighborhood? Do you know his/her name? Would he/she be interesting to talk to?

_____

_____

Who is a person that you know who knows a lot about the history of your area? *(This could be a friend, a relative, a local storekeeper, a barber, or someone you know "officially.")* Do you think this person would be willing to talk to two or three interns?

_____

_____

What community agency do a lot of people use in your area?

_____

_____

Do you know someone there who knows a lot about the agency and what it does? If so, who is he/she? What is his/her title?

_____

_____

Those who do the following will receive a small stipend:

Would you be willing to be on a panel representing your neighborhood? ☐ Yes ☐ No

(This would be in front of about 25 interns on Thursday, December 5th, 3:30-5:30.)

Would you be willing to spend more time planning the October 11th visits? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you be willing to be a neighborhood guide on October 11th? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered yes to any of the last three questions, how can I most easily get in touch with you?

Phone_____ Email_____

Which is better? _____

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SITE SEMINAR 6

Bringing It All Back Home

Setting/Time

The interns' neighborhoods/early November

Goals

- To capture their neighborhood in images;
- To compare their neighborhood with where their students live; and
- To see the disjunction and similarities between the students' and interns' experience of place.

Description of Site Seminar

Armed with cameras, the interns explored their neighborhoods and captured 10 photographs of significant spots. The pictures were developed and posted for everyone to see during one of the seminar sessions. The intern coordinator and Karilyn Crockett from MYTOWN facilitated a discussion with the interns in which they extrapolated themes from their neighborhoods' images, such as: regardless of an intern's race or ethnicity, many of us live in middle-class neighborhoods; many of us live in neighborhoods that have fewer people of color in them than our students do; and the public facilities in the students' neighborhoods are not as well maintained as those in our communities, yet there are many more youth activities and institutions in the students' neighborhoods.

What We Might Change Next Year

- We would supply the interns with cameras earlier in the fall, so they could photograph important places and people in their own neighborhoods as they are studying the students' communities.
- We would give the interns more time to write or talk about their own neighborhoods. We went right into comparing their communities with their students' communities without allowing time for personal stories or reflection.
- We would have interns keep journals during their site seminars. Though they all kept journals for their education classes at their universities, it would be useful for them and for us if they recorded thoughts, questions, and issues during the fall semester on these experiences. We have an extensive videotaped record of the seminars but no written reflection.

Key Implementation Steps

- Buy and distribute disposable cameras. Have interns share the cameras.
- Ask interns to photograph things they pass every day that have meaning to them, that say "my neighborhood" to them, or that mark a place, an event, or a feeling.
- Collect the pictures several days before the seminar. Arrange them along one wall in long strips (like postcard strips) so that interns can compare their neighborhoods.
- When reviewing the pictures, ask interns to pull out specific images or themes that are similar to or contrast with the images they have of their various city tours. Help them explore how these differences or similarities might influence their experience with their students.
- Have interns locate their neighborhoods on a metropolitan map and go back over their site seminar experiences to locate the various neighborhoods they visited. Ask interns to reflect on the range of geographic and social experiences they have each day. Ask interns to reflect on what they learned overall that might impact their practice as teachers in urban schools.
- Ask interns who come from outside the state to reflect on the difference between seeing the city from a distance and seeing it close up. What expectations are or are not confirmed? What insights do they take away that could apply to any urban area?
- The most important questions are: How does this work affect how they see their students? Does it make them more able to see and to serve them better?

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SITE SEMINAR 7

Home from Students' Perspectives

Setting/Time

Site seminar at Fenway High School/late January

Goals

- To have high school students discuss their perceptions of their neighborhoods in order to enrich the interns' knowledge of specific parts of the city; and
- To offer interns the chance to ask students questions about youth experiences in the neighborhoods.

Description of Site Seminar

Students from five different neighborhoods shared what their teachers should know about them, their lives, and their home neighborhoods. In addition, the students shared their insights about teaching and classroom discipline. A question and answer period followed the students' presentations.

Key Implementation Steps

Choose students from every neighborhood who are exceptionally adept thinkers and speakers. Once chosen, treat the students as experts—just as you would with any other guest speaker. Talk with them for a while about what the interns have learned and about what they might want to cover in their panel. If possible, pay the students a modest honorarium or give them a small gift (e.g., a book, a university T-shirt) to acknowledge their contribution.

What We Might Change Next Year

- Instead of this seminar, we might send high school students on tours to introduce the interns to their neighborhoods. Although the students shared information about their neighborhoods, they spent more time offering general advice on being a teacher.
- We would convene the panel closer to the time that tours were held. By late January, all of the interns had started to teach full-time, and it was difficult for them to turn their full attention back to the neighborhood tours in September and October.

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About the Authors

Linda Beardsley is the Director of Teacher Education and School Partnerships at Tufts University and the Director of the Urban Teacher Training Collaborative, a partnership among Fenway High School, the Boston Arts Academy, and Tufts University. Her career in education has been marked by her commitment to identifying how to make public schools a source of pride for their community. Her work has included extensive teaching experience at all levels, from early childhood classrooms through middle school, high school, and university programs, as well as a playing a key role in implementing the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 while working for the state department of education. Her teaching experiences have convinced her that all issues in education can be resolved if the students and families are placed at the center of the discussions.

Anne Newton is a program director at Jobs for the Future where she manages the 2004 MetLife Community College Excellence Awards and the MetLife Foundation Supporting New Teachers' Initiative, which is documenting the experiences of first-year teachers who were participants in the Urban Teacher Training Collaborative. Her career in education has spanned 35 years. She has been a classroom teacher and reading specialist at the elementary and secondary levels, a staff developer, a technical assistance provider to districts and state departments of education with a focus on linking research, policy, and practice, and a director of regional and national networks of educators concerned with the preparation and continual professional development of educators and the restructuring of high schools.

Eileen Shakespear is the Intern Coordinator of Fenway High School and the Boston Arts Academy in the Boston Public Schools. She has been a middle and high school English and humanities teacher in the Boston Public Schools for 31 years. While getting a Master's degree in English from the University of London, School of Education in 1978, she developed a fresh perspective on education and renewed interest in the art of teaching. Changes in school settings in Boston gave her a range of experiences that helped her clarify what approaches to teaching and learning make city schools thrive and conversely what approaches make city schools stagnate. She has participated in dozens of professional development workshops, has been a Boston Public Schools' Lead Teacher mentoring first-year teachers, and has become increasingly involved in teacher training in the last 10 years—co-teaching at Simmons College and Tufts University and giving professional development workshops.

The Urban Teacher Training Collaborative is an innovative school-university, school-based, Master of Arts in Teaching program developed by Tufts University in conjunction with three small Boston Public Schools (the Boston Arts Academy, Fenway High School, and Mission Hill School). Established in 1999, it is supported by Tufts University, the Barr Foundation, and the Boston Public Schools. The program, which is an example of the Professional Development School model, reflects the partners' understanding of the needs of urban students and teachers. The UTTC is committed to developing effective, collegial, and reform-minded teachers for city schools. UTTC student teachers—referred to as interns—work at their assigned schools full-time under the guidance of mentor teachers and university professors, starting on the first day of school and ending in May.

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